

- (2) A change in the applicable law;
- (3) A change in class determination, pursuant to § 512.16;
- (4) The passage of time; or
- (5) A finding that the prior determination is erroneous.

(b) If the Chief Counsel believes that an earlier determination of confidentiality should be modified based on one or more of the factors listed in paragraph (a) of this section, the submitter of the information will be notified in writing that the Chief Counsel has modified its earlier determination and of the reasons for the modification, and will be informed that the information will be made available to the public in not less than twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the notice of modification. The information may be released publicly on an earlier date, if the Administrator determines in writing that the public interest requires that the information be made available to the public on such date. The submitter may seek reconsideration of the modification, pursuant to § 512.19.

§ 512.23 Under what circumstances may NHTSA publicly release confidential information?

(a) Information that has been claimed or determined to be confidential under this part may be disclosed to the public by the Administrator notwithstanding such claim or determination, if disclosure would be in the public interest as follows:

- (1) Information obtained under chapter 325, 327, 329 or 331 of title 49 of the United States Code (formerly under the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act) may be disclosed when that information is relevant to a proceeding under the chapter under which the information was obtained.
- (2) Information obtained under chapter 301 of title 49 of the United States Code (49 U.S.C. § 30101 *et seq.*), relating to the establishment, amendment, or modification of Federal motor vehicle safety standards, may be disclosed when relevant to a proceeding under the chapter.
- (3) Except as specified in the next sentence, information obtained under Chapter 301 of title 49 of the United States Code (49 U.S.C. 30101 *et seq.*), related to a possible defect or noncompli-

ance, shall be disclosed when the Administrator decides the information will assist in carrying out sections 30117(b) and 30118 through 30121 of title 49 or is required to be disclosed under 30118(a) of title 49, except as provided in paragraph (a)(4) of this section.

(4) No information will be disclosed under paragraph (a) of this section unless the submitter of the information is given written notice of the Administrator's intention to disclose information under this section. Written notice will be given at least twenty (20) working days before the day of release, unless the Administrator finds that shorter notice is in the public interest. The notice under this paragraph will include a statement of the Administrator's reasons for deciding to disclose the information, and will afford the submitter of the information an opportunity to comment on the contemplated release of the information. The Administrator may also give notice of the contemplated release of information to other persons and may allow these persons the opportunity to comment. In making the determination to release information pursuant to this section, the Administrator will consider ways to release the information that will cause the least possible adverse effects to the submitter.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part, information that has been determined or claimed to be confidential may be released:

- (1) To a committee of Congress;
- (2) Pursuant to an order of a court of competent jurisdiction;
- (3) To the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation and other Executive branch offices or other Federal agencies in accordance with applicable laws;
- (4) With the consent of the submitter of the information; and
- (5) To contractors, if necessary for the performance of a contract with the agency or any Federal agency, with specific prohibitions on further release of the information.